

VII. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

VII.A SCOPING

On March 3, 1994, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Macomb Bypass. The notice said that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) did not plan to hold a formal agency scoping meeting. The notice indicated that a scoping information packet describing the project was available. The IDOT received no requests for the scoping packet. The IDOT received no letters from local, state, or federal agencies in response to the Notice of Intent. The Notice of Intent and the scoping packet are included in Appendix A.

VII.B COOPERATING AGENCIES

Four agencies asked to participate in the environmental impact assessment process as cooperating agencies. These agencies are the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Department of Agriculture. A cooperating agency is a federal or state agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal for a major federal action, such as the Macomb Bypass. The US Environmental Protection Agency declined to be a cooperating agency. Appendix A includes correspondence from these five agencies responding to the offer to be a cooperating agency.

VII.C STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCY COORDINATION

Between 1995 and 2003, the IDOT held the following meetings with State and Federal agencies:

Date	Participants	Purpose	Results
• August 22, 1995	Illinois Department of Agriculture	Discuss the merits of potential alignment alternatives northwest, northeast, and south of Macomb.	The IDOA representative indicated several preferences from the agricultural impact perspective.
• April 30, 1996 National Environmental Policy Act/Section 404 Merger Meeting	Federal Highway Administration, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	Discuss project purpose and need, review alternatives, and decide which alternatives should be studied further.	Agreement on the purpose and need for the project and alternatives to carry forward for further evaluation. (See Section III.B.3.)

Date	Participants	Purpose	Results
• October 30, 1997	Illinois Department of Agriculture	Discuss the merits of potential alignment alternatives northwest, northeast, and south of Macomb.	The IDOA representative indicated several preferences from the agricultural impact perspective.
• September 25, 1998 National Environmental Policy Act/Section 404 Merger Meeting	Federal Highway Administration, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Discuss the merits of potential alignment alternatives northwest, northeast, and south of Macomb.	1998 agreement on alternative to evaluate in detail in the DEIS. (See Section III.B.3.)
• April 19, 1999	Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Farm Bureau	Discuss the merits of the alignments agreed to at the September 25, 1998 meeting and potential refinements to those alignments.	The IDOA representative indicated several preferences from the agricultural impact perspective. (See Section III.B.3.)
• April 28, 2003 National Environmental Policy Act/Section 404 Merger Meeting	Federal Highway Administration, US Environmental Protection Agency, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (the US Army Corps of Engineers was briefed at a meeting on April 25)	Discuss the merits of revisions to the alternative selected for detailed evaluation in the DEIS in 1998.	Revised agreement on alternative to evaluate in detail in the DEIS. (See Section III.B.3.)

Appendix A presents minutes and letters associated with these meetings, as well as a coordination letter from the IDOT's Division of Aeronautics regarding the clear zone at Smith Airfield.

VII.D LOCAL OFFICIALS COORDINATION

The IDOT also held several meetings with local officials. These meetings were:

- January 27, 1993 with representatives from the City of Macomb.
- July 16 to 18, 1997 (six meetings) with legislative representatives, City of Macomb officials, Macomb Chamber of Commerce representatives, Western Illinois University officials, other local mayors, county engineers, and township officials to introduce the project.

- August 5, 1997 with the Mayor of Quincy, the Quincy Highway Committee, and legislative representatives to discuss alternatives, including dropping potential alignments near Springview Road, and origin and destination study results.
- September 16, 1997 with McDonough County and township officials to discuss alternatives, including dropping potential alignments near Springview Road.
- January 15, 1998 with the Macomb Transportation Committee and the City of Macomb to discuss alignment study results and Macomb's transportation priorities.
- March 6, 1998 with the Mayor of Macomb and three others representing the city to discuss origin and destination study results, freeway versus expressway designation, local road system impacts that could be associated with the different bypass corridors, and traffic noise.
- March 12, 1998 with the Macomb Chamber of Commerce representatives to discuss origin and destination study results, freeway versus expressway designation, and local road system impacts that could be associated with the different bypass corridors.

Appendix A contains the minutes and the list of attendees of those meetings plus a letter from the Sierra Club to the IDOT and two letters sent to local officials by the IDOT to introduce them to the proposed project. Appendix A also includes a letter confirming the Macomb City Council's preference for a freeway over an expressway. It also includes meeting minutes of the Macomb City Council (July 28, 1998) and the McDonough County Board (July 15, 1998) indicating their preference for a bypass northwest of the City of Macomb rather than one south of the city.

VII.E PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

VII.E.1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement Preparation

The IDOT held two public information meetings, November 5/6, 1997 and April 28, 1999. Appendix A includes the following information related to public involvement activities: the newspaper ads advertising the meetings; copies of the handouts given to attendees; a summary of the November meeting comments; and correspondence between the IDOT and the public that followed meetings with the public. The appendix presents the correspondence in chronological order except that all letters from IDOT in response to citizen letter follows the citizen letter regardless of the date.

The November 1997 meetings were attended by 310 persons. At the meetings, there was considerable discussion regarding the predominantly hilly terrain west and northwest of Macomb and the flatter terrain that lies to the northeast, east and south, and the potential impacts associated with traversing either type of terrain. Residents raised concerns about noise and expressed concerns about environmental impacts. Residents also provided a considerable amount of oral history of the Macomb area. Persons commenting noted that a bypass south of Macomb would likely increase traffic on CH 16.

Approximately 74 people attended the April 1999 meeting. After the meeting, 16 individuals submitted additional comments. All comments received expressed concern with alignments within the Northwest Corridor. Primary concerns were the severance of agricultural areas, affects to natural habitats, and affects to residences near the alignments. The IDOT responded to the comments (see Appendix A) and considered them in additional alternative evaluations and the selection of the proposed alignment.

Appendix A also includes minutes of meetings with area property owners held on March 12 and April 8, 1998. Approximately 61 people from the Hidden Hills and Scotland Glen Subdivisions attended the March 12, 1998 meeting to discuss the project's potential impacts to their subdivisions. Approximately 68 people from the Georgetown Subdivision attended the April 8, 1998 meeting to discuss the project's potential impacts to their subdivision.

VII.E.2 Public Hearing

A public hearing was held at VFW Post 1921 in Macomb on December 16, 2003 between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. The sign-in sheets contained 260 names. Appendix A includes copies of the following items related to the public hearing: the newspaper advertisement; the certificate of publication; the handout given to attendees; a summary of the comments received; the hearing transcript; the hearing sign-in sheets; and individual comments from the general public (in alphabetical order by commenter) along with response letters from the IDOT.

Fifty-three people made comments either orally or in writing. The following list summarizes the types of comments received from the public, as well as how they were or will be resolved (as applicable). Refer to Appendix A for full public comments and IDOT responses.

1. Thirty-seven commenters expressed their support for the project. The reasons for supporting the project included:
 - a. The proposed route is the most economically feasible and environmentally responsible, as well as the most advantageous to traffic flow.
 - b. Fewer homes and businesses would be affected by the proposed route.
 - c. The proposed route is closer to Western Illinois University and businesses of Macomb.
 - d. The proposed route would not adversely impact the hospital and schools in the southern part of Macomb, so it would be safer for Macomb's children.
 - e. The proposed route makes good use of existing US 67 north into Macomb.
 - f. The bypass will benefit Macomb and Bushnell businesses.
 - g. The proposed route would not adversely affect established residential areas in the southern part of Macomb.
 - h. The bypass would help to bring developers and new businesses to Macomb.
2. Sixteen commenters expressed their opposition to the project. The reasons for opposing the project included:
 - a. A southern bypass would be less expensive and there are too many railroad and river crossings with the proposed northwest route.

- b. There are several other roadway projects in the Macomb area that should be constructed prior to building the bypass.
 - c. The bypass is not worth the adverse impacts to the environment and there is no economic benefit for Macomb.
 - d. The bypass would turn Macomb into a “ghost town.”
 - e. The bypass is a waste of taxpayers’ money and there are not enough wildlife crossings or protection measures for environmentally sensitive areas.
 - f. The bypass is not needed and cannot be justified in an honest cost-benefit analysis. Also, it destroys farmland and damages wildlife habitat.
 - g. Concern that the bypass passes within one-half mile of the reservoir that is the major water supply for Macomb.
3. Detailed comments supporting and opposing the project included the following:
- a. Five comments supporting the project also expressed support for the proposed wildlife crossings. One of these comments also expressed the desire for the landscaping along the bypass to include native grasses and trees.
 - b. One comment asked if the proposed alignment could be moved south where it crosses the commenter’s property in order to reduce impacts to the property. The IDOT was able to revise the proposed alignment through this property.
 - c. One commenter was concerned about the impact of the proposed project to crop fields being used by Western Illinois University to test fertilizers and soil types. The IDOT responded that the proposed alignment was designed in this area in order to minimize impacts to the University’s farmland and still be able to conform to design standards.
 - d. One comment expressed the desire for a cattle crossing of proposed IL 336 to the south of the Macomb Bypass project. The IDOT was able to add a bridge structure to the proposed design in this area in order to provide safe animal passage under the proposed highway.
 - e. One comment expressed concern about the impacts of the proposed project on Deer Ridge Lake and the surrounding land, including use of the land for hunting. The IDOT responded that, although the lake was constructed after public meetings that were held in April 1999 that showed the preliminary northwest corridor alignment for the proposed bypass, the proposed alignment had been redesigned prior to release of the DEIS to minimize impacts to the lake and other adjacent environmental resources (e.g., the Spring Creek floodplain) to the fullest extent possible.
 - f. One comment stated that the cost estimate for the southern bypass was unfair because it included the cost of the section of US 67 between the interchange with the southern bypass and US 136. In addition, the comment stated that a new environmental study of the Deer Ridge Lake

property is needed. The IDOT responded that, in comparing corridors, a common starting and ending point was used, and that changing the ending points of comparison as the commenter suggested would result in a comparison of unequal components. The comparison of the Macomb Bypass alternates must stand on their own and not be contingent on other studies, such as US 67, which would skew the analysis. In addition, the IDOT reviewed the status of the existing environmental surveys that were completed for the project based on the changes that were made to the Deer Ridge Lake property and concluded that additional surveys are not needed.

- g. One comment requested an aerial photograph showing the proposed project near their property, as well as an estimate of the land that would be required from their property. The IDOT accommodated this request, including providing two options for handling the property severance caused by the proposed project.
- h. One comment was concerned about the impact of corridor protection on landowners within the proposed corridor. This comment also expressed a desire for an interchange at Bower Road, as well as concern over noise impacts to Spring Lake Park and residential areas near the proposed project. The IDOT responded that “hardship” purchases from landowners are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In addition, an interchange is not proposed at Bower Road because adjacent interchanges provide adequate access to this area. Finally, the IDOT responded that the noise analysis for the project indicated that noise impacts to the park would be minimal and that a detailed noise analysis was conducted for all residences near the project. Noise barriers were found to not be a reasonable expense in the areas evaluated.
- i. One comment expressed support for the bypass and appreciation for the wildlife crossings, but was concerned about the residential relocations near 1250N (Adams Street). The IDOT responded that multiple alignments were considered in the 1250N vicinity, but the preferred alignment was chosen because it would have the least impact overall to the natural environment and residential areas.
- j. One comment expressed concern about the potential impacts of the bypass on Smith Airfield. The IDOT responded that the IDOT Division of Aeronautics was contacted about the design of the bypass near the airfield, and the design of the preferred route provides for the airfield’s runway to remain operational.
- k. One commenter provided a copy of an editorial that he published in the Quincy Herald-Whig that discusses his opinions of the substantial benefits resulting from completion of the bypass (see copy in Appendix A).
- l. One comment expressed concern about the southern bypass possibly being reconsidered because of a letter being circulated by a citizen who is opposed to the preferred route. The comment also expressed opposition to the project’s being built at all.
- m. One comment asked whether property owners would be reimbursed for land taken and also wanted to know who would be responsible for maintaining the access roads to this property. The IDOT responded that

property owners would be reimbursed for the fair market value of any property taken, as well as any damages to the remainder of the property, and that all public access roads would be maintained by State or County maintenance crews.

- n. One comment requested a detailed map of a particular property within the proposed project's corridor. The IDOT provided an aerial photograph of this property.

VII.F AGENCY COMMENTS ON THE DEIS AND RESPONSES

Chapter VI includes a list of agencies and local officials that were provided copies of the DEIS. Chapter VI also identifies agencies who responded with comments. The following list summarizes the types of agency comments received. Refer to Appendix A for the full agency comments and IDOT responses (as applicable).

1. Continuous coordination with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency is needed.
2. The National Ocean Service needs to be notified if National Geodetic Survey markers are to be disturbed or destroyed.
3. Consider accommodating the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. The IDOT indicated that once ongoing efforts to create a greenways and bicycle plan for the Macomb area are complete, the IDOT will consider requests to accommodate trails on state right-of-way.
4. Add the LESA (farmland conversion impact rating) score. The LESA score is included in this FEIS.
5. Consider expanding the economic impact discussion, although the conclusion of no adverse impact appears appropriate. The IDOT indicated that they agree the DEIS analysis adequately discloses potential business impacts.
6. The DEIS adequately addresses concerns regarding fish and wildlife resources, as well as species protected by the Endangered Species Act.
7. The project will have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species.
8. Continue implementation of the "avoidance and minimization" concept to natural resource and wetland impacts.
9. Add more information on stormwater runoff and erosion control measures. In response, additional information was added to Section IV.P.1.
10. Explain why wildlife underpasses were sited where they are. In response, revisions were made to Table IV-19 and Exhibit II-2.
11. Add a table summarizing mitigation efforts. The IDOT indicated that this information is in Table IV-18 and is summarized at the end of Section IV.H.3.

- 12. Include correspondence with the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding federal threatened and endangered species. The letter is included in Appendix A of the FEIS.**
- 13. Monitor water quality during construction near wells.**
- 14. Examine buildings for asbestos prior to demolition.**
- 15. Notify the Illinois Department of Public Health if leaking underground storage tanks are found to affect indoor air at residential properties.**
- 16. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the IDOT's findings and commitments related to historic and archaeological resources.**